

Evaluation of Holocaust Education Seminars in the Czech Republic

**Report prepared for the Berlin meeting of the International Task Force on Holocaust
Education**

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A. Introduction

The following report was written by the Anne Frank House and was commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. These activities have been undertaken to

assist the International Task Force on Holocaust Education in its assessment of Holocaust education practices today in various nations, and to arrive at recommendations for future activities.

1. Holocaust Education in the Czech Republic

1.1 Holocaust education during the communist years

As was the case in other Central and East European nations under the Soviet sphere of influence, education was an extension of the political system and the schools were important instruments of the state. Textbooks, curricula, and school activities were all intended to form a "good" communist citizen.

Within the Marxist ideological framework there was no room for discussion about the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. All discussions were framed within the context of class struggle, and focusing on ethnic or religious issues was seen as promoting a "false consciousness" that could only distract students from the "real issues" (class struggle).

All history textbooks had to be officially approved by the government and were a mouthpiece of the government's ideological view. No alternative views were accepted. World War II was generally portrayed as a glorious victory of communism over the forces of evil.

In sum, before 1989 the Holocaust was hardly mentioned in Czech history books, and if it was mentioned it was only in passing. The Jewish victims were not mentioned as a separate group but were included in the totals used for Czech victims in general. The fact that the Nazis persecuted the Czech Jews on the basis of an antisemitic and racist policy was not mentioned at all.

1.1 Holocaust education in the postcommunist years

The Czech author Michal Frankl has recently analyzed the Czech school history books that have been written since 1989, focusing on how they discuss the Holocaust. Much of what we will discuss here is based on personal correspondence during the summer of 2000 relating to his research.

Immediately following the political changes of 1989, there was an urgent need for new textbooks that removed the most blatant communist distortions of world and Czech history. Due to the short time frame in which they were written, most textbooks covering the period of World War II did not change the way the Holocaust was discussed (or in some cases was not discussed). A few books contained fleeting reference to the Jewish transports from the Protectorate and Slovakia. The major changes related to issues such as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the Munich Crisis, and, of course, the communist takeover in 1948. The Holocaust was clearly not a high priority. Only one of these books is still in use, but remains popular (*World History*, published in 1992–93). It makes no mention of the Holocaust, except for a list in the appendix containing numbers of victims from the various European nations.

From 1993 onward textbooks started to be published with more extensive information about the Holocaust. In these books, the measures taken against the Jews after the German invasion are described in detail, though little mention is made of what happened after the Jews were deported. The context that this information is placed in is Czech history during World War II. Czech history at this time is still described mainly in terms of Czech resistance to the Nazis, the bravery of the Czechs, and the suffering that the Czechs had to endure because of their resistance. It is clear, according to Frankl, that the textbook writers at that time had major problems integrating the history of the Holocaust into the larger history of World War II. Several of these textbooks are still quite popular.

Due to pressures from the Jewish community in the Czech Republic and a growing awareness of what truly happened during the war years, the textbooks that have been written since 1995 are again better in quality than their predecessors. The Holocaust is described in more depth in these books and more attention is devoted to this topic. Much of the focus in these Czech history textbooks, however, is still on large-scale resistance against the Nazis. An example of such an approach (in the English language) can be found on the following website (the article by Miroslav Karny): http://www.hrad.cz/kpr/holocaust/index_uk.html.

One recent change is that the Czech Ministry of Education will no longer give its seal of approval to any history textbook dealing with this period without showing it first to Leo Pavlát, the director of the Jewish Museum in Prague.

In the last half year two new textbooks have been written that again show the evolution of thinking that is taking place among textbook writers in the Czech Republic. These newer textbooks focus much more on the racial policies of the Nazis and also on various aspects of the "Final Solution". In addition there is a close look at what happened at the Terezín camp.

According to Frankl there are still some major problems in even the most recent textbooks. These relate to:

- The authors of these textbooks still seem to be looking for the appropriate way of integrating Jewish history and the history of the Holocaust into world history and the history of the Czech Republic. Their efforts have not yet reached professional standards.
- The history of the Holocaust is not seen as a Czech problem or something that the Czechs should spend much time on. This history is discussed as an atrocity that the Germans committed. While the Germans are portrayed as the perpetrators, the Czechs are portrayed as those who would have been (the next) victims. The fact that most

Czechs were bystanders while their Jewish neighbors were transported to concentration camps is not dealt with.

- Czech antisemitism is almost never mentioned. In the earlier books (now only five years old, and still used) it is only mentioned in reference to the Hilsner incident in 1899 (ritual murder accusations followed by riots). However, this history is discussed within the context of T. G. Masaryk's (the future Czechoslovak president) activities. The textbooks published in the last year do make reference to manifestations of Czech antisemitism in 1938–39
- The genocide of the Roma, in previous textbooks mentioned in one sentence or less, receives some limited attention in the newer textbooks. There is no mention of the role that the Czech police played in operating the Roma detention camps.
- For the most part the history of the Roma minority before the Holocaust is ignored. There is also little or no reference to present-day discrimination toward the Roma.

At the present moment there are approximately 13 approved (by the Ministry of Education) history textbooks in the Czech Republic that deal with the history of World War II and the Holocaust. A new textbook, sponsored by the Ministry of Education, focusing solely on the Holocaust, has recently been published (6,000 copies printed). In addition, the Czech translation of the Swedish book *Tell Ye Your Children* is imminent. Some 7,500 copies of this book (with adaptations) will be distributed to schools.

Textbooks are not always a reflection on how the Holocaust is actually taught. According to Frankl it is hard to estimate how much time teachers devote to the topic of the Holocaust in Czech schools. More than before 1989, this will depend on the interest of particular teachers. He estimates that most teachers spend at best one lesson on this issue. Because of time pressures many teachers never get around to teaching at all about the Holocaust. In general,

when the Holocaust is mentioned in textbooks it is given considerably less attention than Czech resistance, which remains the preferred topic.

There are presently Ministerial plans to include study of the Holocaust as a topic in the pre-service training of teachers and in the study of philosophy at the Czech universities. This will perhaps stimulate future teachers to spend more time on this topic.

Outside of their formal history lessons (but within an educational context) children growing up in the Czech Republic today have the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust in the Czech Republic in other ways. We mention three examples:

- Most children in the Czech Republic will not learn about the Holocaust for the first time in their history lessons (in grade 9), but in their Civic education lessons. In the sixth grade (11 and 12 year olds) many young children hear about the Holocaust in the context of discussions about racism, totalitarianism and antisemitism (this is discussed further in section 4.3).
- Children from around the country were invited last January by the Czech government to compete in a writing competition entitled "Holocaust—Conscience of the Mind."
- The Ministry of Education has been initiating various other projects that focus on the Holocaust. An example is the project entitled "Disappeared Neighbors," in which elementary and high school students are asked to find out more about people in their community who died the Holocaust or managed to survive it.
- Dozens of schools have visited the Terezín Memorial and the Jewish Museum, where they have received educational programs. Dozens more have planned such trips. These educational trips complement what students learn in the classroom.

In sum, we can say that the most recently published textbooks are substantially better than the ones that were written even five years ago. However, there remains room for

improvement. The issues of Czech collaboration, Jewish and Roma history, the history of antisemitism in the Czech Republic and the issue of the Roma Genocide deserve more attention. Unfortunately, though the textbooks are improving rapidly, most teachers seem to spend very little time actually discussing the Holocaust (especially in history lessons). In recent years the Czech Ministry of Education has initiated a variety of projects and programs that focus on the Holocaust.

During the visit of the Dutch/British delegation on December 13, 2000, it became clear that the Czech government is working hard on improving the materials that are presently used in schools. New material has been developed for both teachers and pupils. It is important to proceed with this work.

2. Describing the Czech Holocaust education seminars given in 2000

2.1 Background and organization of the seminars

Starting in March 2000 four Czech institutions collaborated in the organization of a series of two to three day seminars for Czech teachers entitled: "How To Teach the Holocaust." The four institutions involved in the organization of the seminars were: Czech Ministry of Education, Terezín Memorial, Educational and Cultural Center of the Jewish Museum in Prague, and the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno. History teachers and educators from around the country were invited to (voluntarily) participate in these seminars.

Member nations of the International Task Force, invited by the Czech Government, agreed to send experts to several of the Czech seminars in order to gain a better impression of how Czech teachers are being taught about the topic of the Holocaust.

The seminars took place partially in the Educational Center of the Jewish Museum in Prague, and partially at the Terezín Memorial. Due to this approach it was possible for the participants to gain fairly detailed information about the educational programs being offered to schools by these two institutions. As a result, teachers could be seen planning field trips for their classes.

During the three day seminar the participants were subjected to a very tight program. From early morning until well into the evening they were given a great deal of information about the Holocaust.

2.2 Aims of the seminars

As far as outreach is concerned, the main goal of the organizers was to have one teacher from every school in the Czech Republic attend one of the seminars. Subsequently these teachers are supposed to transfer their newly attained knowledge to their colleagues (multipliers).

The actual aims of the seminars, regarding transfer of knowledge, were:

- 1. To know what happened in the past.**
- 2. To know why it happened.**
- 3. Active participation of today's youth to prevent such events from happening again.**

Description of the trainers and the participants

The trainers that were involved in teaching the teachers were for the most part academic lecturers with a good deal of historical knowledge. A few lecturers were individuals who had experience with school groups (especially at Terezín) or came from a more psychological perspective. All of the trainers were Czech. There are various indications that the seminars improved later in the year. The trainers worked more as a team and some of the weaker presentations were either dropped or strengthened.

Approximately 40 participants attended each seminar. At this point in time (September 2000) approximately 200 teachers and educators have participated in the seminars. Due to overwhelming interest the organizers have agreed to train not 400 teachers (as initially planned), but 700 teachers. Other teachers are now being turned away. The seminars will continue into the spring of 2001.

2.4 Description of the content of the seminars

Although there was some variation per seminar, the following topics were presented (not always by the same speaker) in most seminars:

Lecture-format

- Information on Judaism and Jewish settlement in Bohemia and Moravia
- Antisemitism and the Final Solution in present day textbooks
- The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia after 1941
- The role of Terezín in the Final Solution
- Lecture about activities in Terezín with schoolgroups
- Talk by Holocaust survivors
- Talk by participants who had visited Yad Vashem or The Holocaust Memorial Museum
- The Roma: History and traditions

- The Roma Holocaust during World War II
- Children and youth in the Terezín ghetto

Non-lecture format

- Psychological aspects of genocide (later removed from program)
- Guided tours of several synagogues
- Guided tour of Terezín memorial
- Visit to Jewish cemetery
- Group work: preparing a lecture or lesson plan
- Dealing with insulting and discriminatory comments (only in later seminars)

Some changes were made after the first seminars due to feedback from the expert observers and the teachers themselves.

2.5 Description of the methodology used in the seminars

Almost without exclusion the lecture format was used to present information to the teachers and educators (approximately 80 percent of the presentations). Little use was made of overheads, videos, flip charts, etc. Though on a few occasions small group work was used to encourage discussion, this was rare. In the later seminars this improved, though not drastically. These later seminars did allow more room for discussion and also slightly more interactive work.

Theatre was used as one component of the seminar, but in a passive sense. The participants watched the play *Brundibar in Terezín*, but this was done without discussion or reflection on how the play could be used educationally.

The participants were also taken on guided tours of several synagogues and the Terezín Memorial, but again this was a fairly passive experience and there was little room for discussion.

3. Evaluating the Seminars

3.1 Describing the evaluation instruments

The seminars were evaluated using several assessment tools:

- Each of the observers submitted a detailed report after they attended one of the seminars. A great deal of information was culled from these reports.
- In addition to these reports the observers were also sent a later questionnaire (Appendix I) for the purposes of this evaluation. In this questionnaire they were asked to indicate what they thought the main strengths and weaknesses were of the seminars, and what they recommended for the future.
- On September 15, 2000 a one-day focus group took place with a random sample of 18 teachers and educators in Plzen. They were asked about how they teach the Holocaust, what textbooks they use, their experiences with the seminars, and what their needs are for the future.

3.2 Evaluations of the international observers

Reports from the following international observers were received:

Stephen Feinberg (US Holocaust Memorial Museum)(attended the seminar from March 3–5, 2000)

Barry van Driel (Anne Frank House) (attended the seminar from March 3–5, 2000)

Carmit Sagie (Yad Vashem) (attended the seminar from March 3–5, 2000)

Milos Stejskal (Interpreter) (attended the seminar from March 3–5, and March 31–April 2, 2000)

Noreen Brand (Florida Holocaust Museum)(attended the seminar from March 29–April 2, 2000)

Jeremy Cresswell (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)(attended the seminar from March 31–April 2, 2000)

Wolf Kaiser (Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz) (attended the seminar from May 12–15, 2000)

The comments in this section are derived from the original reports of the observers and a special questionnaire (Appendix I) sent to them during the summer of 2000. It is clear from the later reports (and this is stated explicitly) that the first reports had had an impact on the later seminars. Due to the initial feedback from the observers, efforts were made to make improvements, especially to the teaching methodology and the amount of time spent on introductions, discussions, and questions.

Organization

All of the observers commented that they were impressed with number of teachers who were attending these seminars on Holocaust Education, the commitment of the organizers, and the organizational work that had been done to make the seminars possible. Also the fact that the Czechs were willing to approach the topic of the Holocaust so candidly made an

impression. All of the observers also felt that it was very effective to have the seminars take place in locations closely attached to the history of the Holocaust.

A major critique was that the days were too full (of lectures) and that there was an overload of information. Because of the information overload participants had little time to reflect and discuss (though this improved in the later workshops).

Another critique regarding the organization related to the fact that too few efforts were made to start the seminars by assessing the experiences that the participants already had: what the participants already knew, what textbooks they used, how they had been trained in the past, what their needs were during the seminar, how motivated their pupils were to learn this history, what misconceptions these students tended to have, etc.

Note: As there were more seminars organized, it is very well possible that the organizers learned from earlier experiences. As Dr. Jan Munk told us, this was in fact the case.

Some teachers taught at the elementary level, while others taught grade 9 and still others grade 12 (for instance). The different needs of these age groups were not addressed during the seminars (12 year olds will need different information than 18 year olds).

Aims

The observers felt that the aims of the seminars were well chosen, but felt that much of the training given to the teachers fell short of reaching these aims. Especially the two aims of "to know why it happened" and "active participation of today's youth to prevent such events from happening again" were insufficiently dealt with.

Content

The organizers provided an enormous amount of information. Though some observers felt that certain lectures were confusing and factually not very accurate, for the most part the lectures were of academic quality.

A great deal of time was spent on the history of Judaism and Jewish settlement in Bohemia and Moravia and on the history of Terezín. This was seen as a positive aspect of the seminars because both are critical to understanding the history of what happened in the Czech Republic, and because these topics were often ignored or distorted in past textbooks and training programs.

The observers agreed that too little (not enough) information was provided regarding the following topics:

- The rise to power of Hitler and the Nazis
- The history of antisemitism
- Why the Jews were especially targeted
- The phenomenon of scapegoating
- The historical context (was not broad enough)
- Placing the Czech experiences in various international contexts
- The history of how the concentration camps were created
- The connection past-present
- How to make the Holocaust relevant for young people today

One other issue deserves special attention. There was no mention of how the topic of Holocaust education could be dealt with at the whole school level. For instance, there was no mention of how teachers could work together in teams on this topic within one school. This

could increase significantly the number of hours students are confronted with the topic of the Holocaust (e.g., in civics, history, literature, foreign language lessons)

Methods

The major criticism of the Holocaust Education seminars, and this was shared by all observers, was that there was too much dependency on the frontal lecture format. Other pedagogical methods were infrequent and did not seem to fit into the overall structure. Information transmission was thus primarily in one direction - from lecturer to listeners (the teachers). Too much attention was devoted to facts and dates, which might have led to more knowledge, but not necessarily more understanding. There was relatively little use of interactive methods, nor a discussion of teaching methodologies and learning strategies. The title of the seminar series was "How To Teach the Holocaust" but most teachers seemed to come away not knowing *how* to teach about this topic. Some were even confused and unsure how to teach so much information in the short period of time they tend to have at their disposal (especially in history lessons).

In general, too little use was made of artifacts, videotapes, maps, timelines, slides, overheads, etc.

Note: This situation did improve, however, in the later seminars. This can be of interest for future programs and cooperation with the International Task Force.

In sum, the lecture format made it difficult for teachers to get a better grasp of the most effective ways of teaching about the Holocaust in their classrooms, and how to collaborate with colleagues when addressing this important and cross-curricular topic.

3.3 Evaluations of the participants

On March 5, 2000, the Czech Press Agency interviewed one of the participants (the only person quoted in the article) of the first seminar. He was quoted as saying that he: " had acquired a lot of information about the Holocaust but had not discovered how to pass on this knowledge to his students." This statement would be echoed by a group of other teachers on a later occasion.

On September 18, a group of 18 teachers came together, facilitated by the Anne Frank House, for a one-day meeting to talk about their experiences with Holocaust Education and the Prague/Terezín seminar. These teachers had been selected at random. This seminar started with the teachers individually filling out a questionnaire (Appendix 2) that asked them to reflect on the Holocaust Education seminar they had participated in, to discuss whether this seminar had changed the way they now teach this topic (and will teach it in the future), what textbooks they have used, the strengths and weaknesses of these textbooks, and what kind of training they feel they need in the future. The remainder of the day these various issues were discussed in depth (primarily through groupwork).

Almost without exception the teachers were satisfied with the seminar they attended earlier this year. They were especially satisfied with the location of the seminars (they felt that having the seminar at Terezín had made a major impact on them) and the materials they had received. The teachers were disappointed with the textbooks they were using in their schools and felt that the additional materials they had received made it possible to improve their teaching drastically. Many now spend far more hours than before teaching this topic (and with more motivation - this was also true of their students they said).

Many teachers complained about the fact that history teaching does not have a high priority in a country that is trying to economically catch up with Western Europe. The consequence, they commented, was that history teaching is given low priority and that it is hard to find time

for Holocaust education within history lessons. Also, the curriculum is fairly strict, making it easy to not discuss the Holocaust if one would wish to do so.

The situation is quite different in civics education. Teachers have much more freedom when teaching this topic, and all of the teachers present at this seminar who teach Civics (approximately half) also spend time talking about the Holocaust. Some teachers, thanks especially to the materials received at Terezín, now spend a considerable amount of time on the Holocaust during these lessons (three teachers claimed that they plan to spend more than 20 hours during the next school year on this topic in their civics lessons).

Note: A major problem, according to the teachers, is that the Holocaust is not mentioned in the civics textbooks at all. Therefore, they are completely dependent upon additional materials and their own creativity.

Since all of the teachers tend to teach more than one subject area (a common pattern in the Czech Republic) the new materials and training have helped them to spend a reasonable amount of time on the Holocaust in different subject areas. When confronted with the observation by Michal Frankl (see chapter on textbooks) that Czech history teachers spend a total of approximately one hour on average on this topic, they were quick to point out that this was probably true. They felt that those that had volunteered for the seminars organized by Jan Munk were especially motivated to learn more about the Holocaust.

Most teachers were still not very interested or too poorly trained, according to them. Upon returning to their schools some teachers had met enthusiastic colleagues that also wanted to participate in the (over-subscribed) seminars organized by Jan Munk. About half, however, had met with indifference (though none mentioned hostility).

Many teachers teach civics in addition to history. As a consequence, the Holocaust is taught in different contexts. During history lessons the Holocaust tends to be taught in the context of

WW II and sometimes in the contexts of Czech history, the history of Nazi Germany and the history of antisemitism. In their civics classes students can potentially receive a fair amount of Holocaust education within the context of citizenship and anti-racism discussions (despite nervousness about the Roma issue). Again, it needs to be emphasized that the civics textbooks used by these teachers tend to contain no reference to the Holocaust.

The fact that these teachers do discuss this topic during their civics lessons is a clear indication that they are individually motivated to do so.

The main complaints of the teachers regarding the Holocaust seminars earlier this year related to their belief that too much information was packed into too short a time and that they had not truly learned *how* to teach their students about the Holocaust (as mentioned in the newspaper quote). The teachers were much less critical of the methods used during the seminars than the international observers, but also expected the types of lectures they had received.

One or two participants mentioned the issue of the Roma genocide and also contemporary racism against Roma, but the group did not respond when such comments were made. It appeared that the majority of participants preferred to avoid discussion of this issue.

Several teachers mentioned that they would appreciate more contact with colleagues who are interested in the topic of the Holocaust, especially those who had encountered indifferent colleagues in their schools.

Regarding future training several participants in the meeting indicated that they would especially like to receive additional training in which they would be taught how to use concrete materials (and not just receive these materials). The teachers thus again referred to the *how* issue in their responses. They also wanted more training at sites that are historically relevant. For these teachers, attending a seminar at an actual historical site such as Terezín

allowed them to take relevant materials with them, arrange school trips, get a much better "feel" of history, etc.

Interestingly, of the 18 teachers who attended the meeting only one did not use the internet in school. Eight teachers even used the internet with their students (especially for research purposes). They indicated that more information on the internet would help both them and their students.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The following recommendations (and conclusions) have been strongly influenced by the suggestions made by the various international observers who attended the Holocaust education seminars, the aims of these seminars (as presented by the organizers), and the feedback given by the participants themselves. Another important factor is the issue of feasibility. The recommendations listed here are all considered, according to the writers of this report, to be within the realm of possibilities (for Task Force nations to be involved in) if the political will is present.

- 1. The seminars provided to the Czech teachers in 2000 should be continued in the future, and the organizations involved in organizing the previous seminars should remain involved.**

The participants considered the seminars to be very informative (especially the materials provided) and they felt that in the future they would have more information to work with. For many teachers who attended the special meeting in Plzen the seminars in Prague/Terezín represented a turning point in their teaching.

2. The proposed week-long seminar, originally planned for early 2001, should be postponed and imbedded in a larger, more extensive collaborative effort.

The week-long seminar that was to end the series of seminars (planned for February 2001) is best postponed for several reasons. First, the original series of seminars will still be offered throughout 2000 and the spring of 2001. Second, Jan Munk, the main organizer of the teacher training seminars, desired assistance from Task Force countries in conceptualizing and carrying out this seminar. The time is too short to do this appropriately. After consultation he has agreed to let this seminar function as the beginning of a new, larger project. The recommendations mentioned here should guide the conceptualization of such a new project.

Note: recent correspondence with Dr. Munk indicate this seminar will now take place in November 2001

3. Task Force nations should assist and cooperate with the Czech partners in addressing "*How To Teach the Holocaust.*"

"How to teach the Holocaust" was the title chosen for the seminars that have already taken place, but the "how" issue received scant attention. Especially the methodology used in the teacher training seminars was criticized by the observers. Most teachers

admitted that they had gained a lot of knowledge about the Holocaust but had learned little about how to work with their students on this issue. Teachers will need to learn about learning strategies that go beyond lecturing. These include using drama in education approaches, working in cross-curricular teams, developing extra-curricular activities, implementing student-centered education (e.g. through peer education), adopting a whole-school approach to educational reform (see also recommendation 11), etc. Two distinct possibilities that can accomplish such change are to "train-the-trainers" and also to work closely with the Czech trainers in the near future on a (limited) number of pilot projects. This will also promote international collaboration among experts.

4. Task Force nations should assist and cooperate with Czech universities, teacher training institutes, and pre-service education centers in setting up programs to teach future teachers *how* to teach the Holocaust.

Plans already exist in the Czech Republic to set up several of these programs, and the first steps have been taken in this direction. There is great amount of expertise in various Task Force nations that could assist the Czechs in these efforts.

5. It is recommended that in any future Task Force supported activities in the Czech Republic (in collaboration with Czech partners) the issue of the Roma genocide and Roma persecution is given considerable weight.

One of the most difficult issues for teachers today in the Czech Republic is how to deal with the issue of the Roma genocide during World War II and the history of Roma persecution in general. Various observers at the seminars noticed that many teachers felt quite uncomfortable about this topic. Also, little attention is devoted to the issue of

the Roma in present day textbooks. NGOs such as the European Roma Rights Center and the Open Society Institute can be very useful partners in tackling these problems.

- 6. Teachers need to know more about the long history of antisemitism (and anti-Roma sentiment) in their own country and the discussion that has taken place elsewhere around bystanders and collaboration, and the "other" victims. These issues should be addressed in future "training the trainer" seminars.**

The second main aim of the seminars was: to know why it (the Holocaust) happened. Too little attention has been devoted to this issue in Czech textbooks. Most observers who attended the teacher training seminars commented that too often during these seminars the Germans were blamed for the Holocaust. The Czechs shared no blame or responsibility for Holocaust related events. Also, the only two groups of persecuted minorities that were mentioned in the seminars were the Jews and Roma. There is little or no mention of other victims such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, the physically and mentally disabled, etc. Learning to structure lesson plans around the distinctions between victims, bystanders, perpetrators, and helpers would be an effective approach to improving the way the Holocaust is taught.

- 7. Czech Educators should continue to be invited to seminars taking place abroad.**

Yad Vashem and the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington have opened their doors to Czech educators in the past. The Imperial War Museum in London plans to do the same in the future. These initiatives should be applauded and hopefully they will be continued. The creation of a special scholarship fund might be another way of helping

more teachers get the training they need at the world's best institutions. Various observers received emails from teachers asking about such scholarships.

8. Czech teachers and students need to be connected to teachers and students abroad who are working on Holocaust-related projects.

Czech authorities are currently active in organizing a variety of activities that go beyond what students learn during their history or civic education lessons. It would be very useful to connect teachers and students to their peers in Task Force nations. A website is an ideal tool for these purposes.

9. The Czechs will need assistance in developing seminars and materials for age-specific instruction.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the seminars made no distinction between education for 12 year olds and 18 year olds, for example. In general there are too few age-specific materials at present in Eastern and Central Europe (for instance there are also very few children's books that have been published about this period).

10. An educational website needs to be created for Czech teachers who deal with the Holocaust in their teaching.

One of the goals of the organizers was to train hundreds of teachers who could serve as multipliers in their schools. However, teachers will always need support from colleagues and outside experts to accomplish this feat. Several teachers mentioned during the

feedback meeting that they felt isolated and that they needed further training and support. It is recommended that a network of teachers, who are interested in promoting responsible Holocaust education to their students, should be created. Since many schools in the Czech Republic are presently being connected to the web (and almost all of the teachers at the feedback meeting mentioned that they used the internet in school) the creation of a website is an effective way forward. Teachers can download the most recent information on the Holocaust and Holocaust education, find a variety of classroom materials, and communicate with other teachers about their activities, questions, etc.

11. Czech teachers need training in how to tackle the issue of the Holocaust at the whole school level.

Too often this important topic is only discussed in history lessons (if there) and perhaps in civic education classes. This is a missed opportunity for teachers from different disciplines to collaborate on teaching the subject of the Holocaust. This implies much more communication between teachers than is generally the case in the Czech Republic (and elsewhere).

12. Future teacher training seminars need to address how the history of the Holocaust can be made relevant for the lives of young Czechs today. Teachers need to learn how to make appropriate connections to other histories and to the world of today.

The third main aim of the seminars was: active participation of today's youth to prevent such events from happening again. Almost no attention was devoted to this issue during the seminars. This requires knowledge on the part of the teachers regarding how to make the past relevant for today, and how to place the events of today in an historical

perspective. Many teachers combine their teaching of history with the teaching of civics. This provides an excellent opportunity to help teachers develop cross-curricular learning strategies.

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6. Epilogue

As mentioned earlier in this report, a governmental delegation from the Netherlands, together with a representative of the government of the United Kingdom, visited Prague on December 13, 2000. The delegation (including officials from the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and representatives from the Anne Frank House) met a delegation from the Czech Republic. The Czech delegation included the Deputy-Minister of the Ministry of Education and civil servants of this ministry, the Ministry of Culture, the cabinet of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as representatives from the Terezin Memorial Museum.

Parties agreed that their meetings were very fruitful and recently developed education material was shown to the Dutch/British delegation. The two delegations discussed cooperation between the International Task Force and the Czech Republic. The Anne Frank House presented a plan for further cooperation. Also, the Terezin Memorial Museum presented its plans for the future.

The Czech Republic again expressed its interest becoming a member of the International Task Force. The Dutch delegation communicated this to the German presidency and committed itself to discuss the possible Czech membership during the Berlin meeting.

The Czech government has appointed a contact person for International Task Force affairs. This was communicated to Dr. Pavel Cinck on December 29, 2000. A copy of this letter is included as an attachment to this report.

The Dutch delegation is convinced that the Czech Republic is making significant progress in Holocaust Education. The Czech government has committed itself to the issue of Holocaust education, to the improvement of teacher training, and to the development of better educational materials. Cooperation between the the Czech Republic and The International Task Force is mostly welcomed by the British/Netherlands delegation of the Czech liaison project. The delegation of The Netherlands will propose in due time a (part of a larger) project in the Czech Republic to be financed through the Fund of the Task Force.

The Netherlands will inform the other Task Force members about the progress that has been made in the liaison projects, and also regarding the preparations under way that could ideally lead to the Czech Republic joining the International Task Force in the foreseeable future.